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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE
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AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL SHANGHAI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL SHENYANG IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CHENGDU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 14054

CINCPAC FOR FPA

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: SITREP NO. 8: TIANANMEN SQUARE CROWDS GROW
TO 300,000 OR MORE ON THE EVENING OF MAY 21;
GOVERNMENT DENIES LI PENG HAS ORDERED THE PLA TO
ATTACK STUDENTS EARLY ON MAY 22.

REF: BEIJING 14053 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

[1](#)2. SUMMARY: ACTIVISTS AND ONLOOKERS RETURNED TO
TIANANMEN SQUARE IN LARGE NUMBERS ON THE EVENING OF
MAY 21 AMID WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT PLA TROOPS WOULD
ATTACK THE SQUARE IN THE EARLY HOURS OF MAY 22. BY
2100 (LOCAL TIME), THE CROWD HAD GROWN TO OVER
300,000. THERE WERE AT LEAST 50,000 ACTIVISTS IN THE
SQUARE, WITH MORE ARRIVING EVERY MINUTE. THE
GOVERNMENT DENIED CLAIMS BY STUDENTS THAT PREMIER LI
PENG HAD ORDERED THE ARMY TO MOVE INTO THE SQUARE AT
0500 ON MAY 22 AND KILL OR CAPTURE ALL THE STUDENTS
THERE. STUDENTS HAD A BUS IN POSITION TO BLOCK THE
POSSIBLE EMERGENCE OF TROOPS FROM THE WEST EXIT OF
THE TRAIN STATION, AND WERE USING LARGE CONTINGENTS
OF ACTIVISTS TO BLOCK MAJOR INTERSECTIONS NEAR
TIANANMEN SQUARE. MEDIA SOURCES REPORTED THAT THREE
AIDES TO ZHAO ZIYANG HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, AND THAT THE
MILITARY HAS TAKEN CONTROL OF PEOPLE'S DAILY AND
CCTV. EARLIER IN THE DAY, FOREIGN NEW AGENCIES
PREDICTED THAT THEIR LINES WOULD BE CUT SOON. THEY
ARE USING TRAVELLERS TO GET VIDEO MATERIAL OUT OF THE
COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

TIANANMEN CROWD NUMBERS 300,000 AT 2100

[1](#)3. AT 1900 ON MAY 21, THE CROWD AT TIANANMEN WAS
RELATIVELY LIGHT, NUMBERING ABOUT 150,000 TO
200,000. ABOUT 50,000 OF THAT NUMBER WERE ACTIVISTS
ON THE SQUARE. STUDENTS WERE SPREADING THE WORD OF
"LI PENG'S THREE POINTS" (SEE BELOW), CALLING ON
ONLOOKERS TO SUPPORT THEM WHEN THE SOLDIERS ARRIVED
EARLY ON MAY 22. STUDENTS TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE
CROWD WOULD INCREASE IN NUMBER AFTER NIGHTFALL, IN
EXPECTATION OF THE ARMY'S ARRIVAL. BY 2100, THE
CROWD HAD GROWN TO ABOUT 300,000. ACTIVISTS WERE
BEING FERRIED IN BY TRUCKS, BUSES, AND CARS.
ONLOOKERS WERE BICYCLING INTO THE TIANANMEN AREA.
AT 2100 ONE OF THE OUTER GRANDSTANDS AT THE
NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE SQUARE WAS FULL.

GOVERNMENT DENIES ATTACK ORDERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN

[1](#)4. ALL THROUGH THE DAY ON MAY 21, STUDENTS IN THE

SQUARE WERE SPREADING THE WORD THAT THE ARMY HAD RECEIVED ORDERS FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO ATTACK THE STUDENTS AT 0500 (LOCAL TIME) ON MAY 22. STUDENTS CLAIMED THAT SYMPATHETIC SOURCES IN THE GOVERNMENT HAD INFORMED THEM THAT TROOPS HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY PREMIER LI PENG TO CLEAR THE SQUARE, "EVEN IF 200,000 STUDENTS WERE KILLED." PRISONS WERE BEING CLEARED TO HOUSE STUDENTS, STUDENTS SAID, AND CLEAN-UP CREWS ALERTED TO TIDY UP THE SQUARE AS SOON AS THE STUDENTS WERE REMOVED. CNN REPORTED THIS INFORMATION ON MAY 21, CITING STUDENT SOURCES. AT 2230 ON MAY 21, THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A DENIAL THAT ANY SUCH ORDER HAD BEEN GIVEN. THE GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT, REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES OVER RADIO AND TELEVISION, RECOUNTED EACH ELEMENT OF THE ALLEGED "ORDER" AS DESCRIBED BY THE STUDENTS AND DENIED THAT ANY PART OF IT WAS TRUE. CITIZENS WERE WARNED TO BEWARE OF RUMOR MONGERS.

THE CROWD'S MOOD: STUDENTS PREPARED TO DIE

15. EMBOFFS SPOKE TO QINGHUA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO WERE GUARDING ONE EXIT FROM THE QIANMEN SUBWAY. THE STUDENTS, EXPECTING TO BE ATTACKED IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 22, SAID THAT THEY WOULD NOT USE VIOLENCE AGAINST THE SOLDIERS. THE YOUTHS SAID THEY WERE PREPARED TO DIE TO STOP THE ARMY FROM CLEARING TIANANMEN SQUARE OF STUDENTS. THE ONLOOKERS AND STUDENTS SEEMED ENERGETIC AND DETERMINED IN THE MID-EVENING HOURS OF MAY 21.

TRAIN STATION: WEST EXIT BLOCKED

16. AS NOTED SITREP 7, THERE ARE CONFIRMED REPORTS OF A TROOP TRAIN AT THE TRAIN STATION. STUDENTS ON THE SQUARE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THEY HAD SENT EMISSARIES TO INVESTIGATE THE SITUATION AT THE BEIJING TRAIN STATION. BETWEEN 2130 AND 2145, EMBOFFS SAW AN EMPTY BUS BLOCKING THE WEST EXIT OF THE TRAIN STATION, THE MOST DIRECT ROUTE TO THE SQUARE FROM THE STATION. EMBOFFS ESTIMATED THAT UP TO SIX THOUSAND STUDENTS WERE IN THE VICINITY OF THE TRAIN STATION. THE TRAINS APPEARED TO BE RUNNING NORMALLY DURING THE DAYLIGHT HOURS OF MAY 21. EMBOFFS MET A WORKER IN THE SQUARE WHO HAD ARRIVED BY TRAIN FROM NANJING THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 21. THE WORKER HAD SEEN SOLDIERS CARRYING RIFLES AND AMMUNITION ON HIS TRAIN, BUT HE SAID THAT THEY WERE FEW IN NUMBER. AT 2200, EMBOFFS WITNESSED ORDINARY TRAVELERS EMERGING FROM THE BEIJING STATION, CARRYING LUGGAGE.

CHONGWENMEN BLOCKADE: STUDENTS TAKE THE LEAD

17. EMBOFFS INTERVIEWED STUDENTS AT CHONGWENMEN INTERSECTION, WHICH WE BELIEVE IS TYPICAL OF OTHERS NEAR THE TIANANMEN AREA. SIX TO EIGHT THOUSAND STUDENTS WERE PRESENT AT THE INTERSECOCTION. A STUDENT FROM XIAN WAS DIRECTING THE CROWD, ABOUT HALF OF WHOM WERE STUDENTS. IN ADDITION TO THE CROWD IN THE INTERSECTION, THERE WERE LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE BEYOND THE BLOCKADE. IN TALKING WITH PEOPLE AT THE INTERSECTION, EMBOFFS WERE TOLD THAT ALTHOUGH LOCAL PARTY COMMITTEES WERE NOT INVOLVED MANY PARTY MEMBERS WERE. THE PARTICIPANTS TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THEY BELIEVED THAT THE MILITARY WAS GOING TO ADVANCE ON THE STUDENTS IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 22.

ZHAO AIDES REPORTEDLY ARRESTED

18. A FOREIGN MEDIA SOURCE QUOTED A CHINESE JOURNALIST TO TELL EMBOFF THAT THREE AIDES TO GENERAL SECRETARY ZHAO ZIYANG HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. THE AIDES WERE IDENTIFIED AS BAO TONG, WU JIAXIANG, AND CHEN XIAOLU.

PRESS PROBLEMS

19. UPI AND OTHER AGENCIES EXPECT TO "HAVE THEIR PLUGS PULLED" ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 21. ONE NETWORK WAS THREATENED MAY 20 WITH HAVING ALL OF ITS IDD PHONES CUT OFF, BUT MANAGED TO AVERT THIS THROUGH NEGOTIATION. THE NETWORKS ARE ALL USING TRAVELLERS TO GET VIDEO MATERIAL OUT OF THE COUNTRY; THE USE OF SATELLITE FOR REPORTING IS OUT OF THE QUESTION, AND CCTV FACILITIES ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO FOREIGN TV NETS. RUMORS ABOUND THAT THE MILITARY HAS TAKEN OVER CCTV AND THAT CENSORSHIP OF THE PRINT MEDIA IS IN EFFECT. A U.S. NETWORK SOURCE REPORTED THAT 75 MILITARY OFFICIALS IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES TOOK CONTROL OF THE PEOPLE'S DAILY ON THE MORNING OF MAY 21. NONE OF THESE REPORTS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED.

LILLEY